



Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; bottomland forests; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

planaria

representative species

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Platyhelminthes - flatworms
Class: Turbellaria
Order: Tricladida

Features

Planaria are flatworms. They have a spade-shaped head. A tubelike pharynx on their belly takes in food and releases wastes. Eyespots on the head allow them to detect and react to light. Planaria are grayish brown in color.

Natural History

Planaria live in spring-fed streams, lakes, and rivers or in damp places under logs and decaying leaves. They eat small organisms and dead organisms. They move by gliding on a layer of mucous and cilia on the belly. They are hermaphrodites, producing both eggs and sperm, but at different times. Fertilization is internal. The eggs are released into the water in capsules and drop to the bottom. Eggs hatch in two to three weeks. Planaria may reproduce asexually if injured.